

Night Shift With God

By Henry F. Unger

RECENTLY, a sprightly mother of seven children approached her parish priest. She seemed worried about her spiritual life.

"Father," she advised, "I've been making the night adoration in the home from 10 o'clock until 11 as a reparation for the sins committed during the night and for the conversion of Russia. But I feel ashamed of myself. That early hour doesn't give enough reparation to the Sacred Heart, I'm sure. Let me take over the 2 to 3 a.m. hour."

Another woman, dying of cancer called her parish priest to her home. She suffered indescribable pains. The woman asked to be enrolled on the list of faithful watchers in the night. The time for the hour must be a Friday. "I want to suffer with Our Lord and I pray that my most severe pains occur during that time."

Like an avalanche, hundreds of Catholics are sweeping the country with their prayers of reparation — all done at night, sacrificing one hour of their sleep once monthly or more to make reparation to the Sacred Heart for evils performed during that night. In the quiet of the night, over 200,000 night adorers convert their rooms into sanctuaries for the Sacred Heart. Prisoners read their prayers on bended knee by the dim light of corridor illumination, old persons bent over with arthritis sit before a statue of the Sacred Heart watching with Him for an hour or more and whole families, awoken each other for an all-night vigil.

Not a new devotion, Night Adoration in the home, launched over 20 years ago by Father Mateo Crawley-Boevey, SS. CC., the saintly Apostle of Love, is a

spearhead in the drive against the opponents of Christian home life. With so many persons unable to attend Mass and the other devotions in the church because of infirmities and other obstacles, Night Adoration in the home provides a substitute. An army of perpetual adorers in the intimacy of their rooms join in union with the priests offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in some part of the world and make reparation for the sins of men.

Letters pouring into the National Center of the Enthronement, in Fairhaven, Massachusetts testify to the appeal of the devotion as well as its results.

A young bride in a Virginia town turns off her jangling alarm clock at 4:30 a.m., once monthly and watches for one hour with the Sacred Heart. She then rushes off to work at 6 A.M. An entire family of 21 members determined to return a hopeless demented child from the asylum. Night Adoration at home was the answer. For several days, the family aroused each other to spend one hour of prayer before a picture of the Sacred Heart. Before the devotion had gone one month, the girl was home with her family, normal and prepared to join the night adorers. Another woman, expecting a child, was warned that the birth would be doubtful. The expectant mother spent the hour from 10 to 11 and soon she gave birth to a healthy, normal child.

Rallying to the plea of "Watch One Hour With Me," the vast praying army is proving to the world that reparation and prayer are the answers to the problems of today. Distinct from adoration in the church, the appealing devotion brings a church into the home. Espe-

cially, reparation is made for sins of pride and sensuality of so many so-called Christian families, most of which are committed during the night.

Under the regulations of the popular League of Night Adoration in the Home, members should be inscribed at a local center or with the National Center in order to gain the plentiful indulgences.

A promise, which does not bind under the pain of sin, even venial, is made that the night adorer will make one hour of adoration once a month during the night. The night begins at 9 p.m., and ends with the hour from 5 to 6 a.m. Generous night adorers leave the choice of their date and hour of adoration to the Director. However, any date and hour of the month may be chosen. To keep accurate records and to maintain an around the clock adoration as in many parishes, deaths and withdrawals should be made known to the Center where the member is registered. It is not necessary to renew the enrollment each year. Once enrolled, the member continues with the League until death or voluntary withdrawal. No charge is made for the inscription of new members, although a small donation will cover the cost of membership card, postage and other literature. It is a League without dues.

Night adoration, not easy with the majority of the adorers, reveals many poignant stories. Down in Alabama, an old negress, a cripple, spends one whole night once a month, praying before a tiny picture of the Sacred Heart.

Father Francis Larkin, SS. CC., National Director of the program, hearing of this devout woman, visited her and asked her to give an hour a month in night adoration.

Quickly, she replied, "Not for Our Lord - not an hour, I will spend the whole night with Him."

In Chicago, the wife of a drunkard trembled each time her husband returned home. Quietly, she arose once weekly during the night and before a statue of the Sacred Heart, prayed for sobriety in her husband. For the first time in 37 years, the husband gave up drinking and now has joined her in a 4 to 5 a.m. adoration.

One generous soul, for over 15 years a faithful night adorer sums up her attitude toward the devotion. "For a long time I have sought consolation in the Heart of Jesus. Now I am offering my poor feeble efforts to console the Heart of Jesus instead, suddenly realizing that it is only in giving that I can receive. I've been a selfish Catholic for so many years. My prayers were mostly petitions."

A night adorer died suddenly in Rochester, NY, the result of a home accident. He had convulsions and died on the day chosen by him and his wife for their long kept night adorations.

A tone soul in a small town generously forfeits her steep so that the parish may return to the Sacred Heart. A convert, the woman found that the League of the Sacred Heart had been dropped in her parish, with the members not intending to revive it.

Aroused in the wee hours of the morning, many adorers are tempted to pass by the hour. One member mentions this when she writes, "I came home rather late and naturally felt too tired to keep the watch. Unconsciously, I set the alarm and on reaching to shut it off and continue to sleep on, I saw an unusual look on the face of the Ecce Homo picture across, my bed. In spite of my 'ducking' under the covers, I had a strange feeling and

couldn't rest. After a struggle, I got on my knees and kept my hour."

So that members do not forget their monthly time for adoration, many of them place their membership cards on the mirror which they always use. Sisters at maternity hospitals ask patients to take an hour in which the baby was born.

Favors received by night adorers are numerous. Ordered to move from a home, and not knowing where to turn, a family spent an hour weekly during the night in adoration. Out of 200 applicants in a new allotment, they were chosen for a new home. A veteran thought his night adoration procured a higher position and a recommendation for a raise in grade and was granted a pension for a service incurred disability in addition to a reconciliation between his family and the family of his late wife. A woman, praying for years, had to wait until her membership in the League of Night Adoration to see her 72 year old father baptized and received into the Catholic Church.

Stirring was the story of a Brooklyn man, a faithful night adorer, who died recently. He had prayed for the return of a friend to the sacraments. Recalcitrant, the fallen-away Catholic persisted in his evil ways. But the night adorer's sacrifices paid off. On the morning of his death, he received word that the friend had made his confession and had received Communion that very morning.

In San Francisco, a little girl approached her nun-teacher, weeping over the fact that her mother would not permit her to continue the night adoration. "But how often do you make this at your home?" the sister asked. "From 11 to 12 every night." "I can see why your mother forbids it."

"But," the girl interrupted, "didn't Father tell us that we had to pay the price for a prodigal? Well, I am trying to pay the price for my father, who has been out of the church for 19 years."

Some time later, the girl, happy and radiant, shouted to the Sister, "It's happened! Dad went to Communion last Sunday."

Another, a Third Order of St. Francis member persevered for several years. Every week from 3 to 4 a.m., she spent as a night adorer and finally her husband returned to the fold of the Church after 24 years. Now he makes the hour with her.

One fervent priest devotes his every spare moment to the spread of the devotion. Over 500 persons are making night adoration in his parish, so that every night hour during the month finds a parishioner keeping watch with Jesus.

To accomplish this great spread of devotion, the priest was aided by a phenomenal school teacher. Returning from school, the teacher would visit homes, explain the night adoration and arrange for a time. For the files of the pastor, the teacher would investigate the spiritual status of the family.

After supper, the young lady and her parents would usually start out on 'Sacred Heart work.' While the daughter would venture into a new home, her parents remained in the car saying the rosary for her intentions.

One woman, in California, discouraged with her husband, who blasphemed regularly, visited her pastor and asked for assistance. Night adoration to the Sacred Heart was recommended.

Months later, the woman again returned, pleading for prayers for her still blaspheming husband, who was dying. The priest advised that he would visit the man.

"Oh no," begged the woman, "don't do that. At the mention of a priest, he blasphemes!"

"Woman, where is your confidence in the Sacred Heart?" said the priest. "Didn't I promise you that your husband would not die without the Sacraments? Have you been faithful?"

Her affirmative nod brought the reply, "Then, this afternoon I will hear his confession," advised Father C - - - .

That afternoon, Father C - - - approached the oxygen tent, where the dying man lay. The priest signalled the man, inquiring whether he would like to go to confession. He nodded yes. The confession followed. The doctors returned and found the man so improved that the next morning he walked to church and received Holy Communion. Night adoration had again paid off.

To assist night adorers to pass their hour pleasantly, it is recommended that the members 'pray the Mass' by using their Missals and reciting the Canon of the Mass with the priest who might be saying the Mass in some part of the world. Also suggested is the procuring of a booklet, "Night Adoration in the Home" written by Father Mateo especially for the hour of adoration in the home. To vary the prayers, Father Mateo has written a series of 21 Holy Hours for every month of the year and special occasions. To make the hour even more fascinating, adorers are urged to pray for special intentions as for our Holy Father the Pope, for peace, for the clergy, for the members of the family who may have gone astray, for those in their agony that night, for the Social Reign of the Sacred Heart and other personal intentions.

To gain more people to "pay the ransom" and spend the hour's adoration once a month, zealous individual promoters labor day and night among the

laity. A man in Connecticut, who is a salesman for a Catholic magazine, solicits night adorers as well as subscriptions. He has sent in hundreds of names. A working girl in Milwaukee has over 1,500 night adorers to her credit. A politician in a state legislature slips in a word or two about the crusade to his political friends and keeps a regular monthly hour of reparation himself. Inspiration to all is the family of 9, ranging from 3 years to 17 years. Once monthly, the family conducts the holy hours around the clock, each member arousing the other, until the father completes the cycle in the morning hours.

Sickness and cold seem to be no obstacle to the determined night adorers. A feeble old woman, 93 years old, weekly kneels before a statue of the Sacred Heart and makes reparation. A man keeps his hour despite the lack of heat in his apartment in the early morning hours.

From coast to coast, the prayers of the night adorers deluge heaven. Under the veil of night, thousands of the faithful make up for the sins of others. Joined by hundreds more adorers each month, many not even registered, the League of Night Adoration is perhaps the finest tonic for a country, whose family life is disintegrating. Promoting the reign of the Sacred Heart, the night adorers promote as well physical and spiritual prosperity for themselves. The streets of America may be silent during the night but from within the apparently quiet homes of these Catholics goes up a roar of earnest prayers, which the Sacred Heart won't reject.

Inquiries and requests for enrollment should be addressed to:

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